

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claims 1 and 13 and canceled claims 3 and 14. Applicant respectfully submits no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-2, 4-11 and 15-19 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 13, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (US Patent No. 6944280) in view of Beever, et al. (US Patent No. 5699356). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims. In order to expedite allowance of this application, as suggested by the Examiner the Applicant has canceled allowable claim 14 and incorporated the allowable subject matter of claim 4 into independent claims 1 and 13.

Since independent claims 1 and 13 now contain allowable subject matter, the Applicant respectfully submits that respective dependent claims 2, 4, 5 and 16 contain the same allowable limitations as claims 1 and 13 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claims 1 and 13. Therefore, the allowance of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 13 and 16 is respectfully requested.

Claims 6-10, 17, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (US Patent No. 6944280) in view of Beever, et al. (US Patent No. 5699356) and further in view of Romero et al (US Patent No. 7249179). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims.

Claims 6-10, 17 and 18 depend from amended claims 1 and 13 respectively, and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of amended independent claims 1 and 13. Therefore, the allowance of claims 6-10, 17 and 18 is respectfully requested.

Claims 11 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (US Patent No. 6944280) in view of Beever, et al. (US Patent No. 5699356) and further in view of Brothers et al (US Patent No. 6789182). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims

Claims 11 and 15 depend from amended independent claims 1 and 13 respectively, and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claims 1 and 13. Therefore, the allowance of claims 11 and 15 is respectfully requested.

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (US Patent No. 6944280) in view of Beever, et al. (US Patent No. 5699356) and further in view of Sheard et al (US Patent No. 6453356). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims.

Claim 19 depends from amended claim 13 and recites further limitations in combination with the novel elements of amended independent claim 13. Therefore, the allowance of claim 19 is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant notes with appreciation the conditional allowance of claims 3 and 14. As the Examiner has suggested, claims 3 and 14 have been rewritten in independent form including all limitation of the base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore no amendments have been made to narrow the scope of the pending claims or to create any sort of estoppel.

Claims 2, 4-11 and 15-19 depend from amended claims 1 and 13 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claims 1 and 13. Therefore, the allowance of claims 2, 4-11 and 15-19 is respectfully requested.

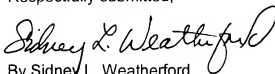
As noted above, claims 1 and 13 have been amended in order to overcome the Examiner's objections. Consequently, the Applicant believes claims 1 and 13 are also in a condition of allowance. The Examiner's consideration of these claims is also respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sidney L. Weatherford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

By Sidney L. Weatherford
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